

# NEWS RELEASE

April 21, 2014

## Arkansas Agriculture Department Accepting Specialty Crop Grant Applications

Arkansas Agriculture Department • #1 Natural Resources Drive, Little Rock, AR 72205  
Phone: 501-683-4851

The Arkansas Agriculture Department is accepting applications for proposals to enhance the competitiveness of Arkansas specialty crops such as fruits, vegetables, floriculture and nuts. Applications will be considered for inclusion in Arkansas' grant proposal for funds provided by the Specialty Crop Block Grant Program administered by the Agricultural Marketing Service of the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA). Approximately \$350,000 may be available to Arkansas under the program. Funds are available as a result of the Agricultural Act of 2014.

Under grant guidelines, state corporations, commodity associations, non-profit organizations, state and local government entities, and colleges and universities may be eligible. Applicants and/or their business or educational affiliation must be located in Arkansas.

Applicants are asked to submit proposals for projects to enhance the competitiveness of specialty crops by:

- Assisting entities in the specialty crop distribution chain in developing Good Agricultural, Good Handling and Good Manufacturing practices, including cost share arrangements for funding audits of small farmer, packer and processor systems;
- Increasing the consumption of specialty crops by improving child and adult nutrition knowledge;
- Increasing the competitiveness of Native American and disadvantaged farmers in producing specialty crops;
- Improving access to specialty crop produce in underserved communities.

- Enhancing food safety;
- Investing in specialty crop research;
- Improving efficiency and reducing costs of distribution systems;
- Developing new and improved specialty crop varieties;
- Eradicating pest and plant health issues;
- Fostering organic and sustainable production practices; and
- Developing local and regional food systems.

Applications must be received by the department by close-of-business May 30, 2014.

Questions regarding the program may be directed to Zachary Taylor, the department's director of marketing, at 501-219-6324 or email [Zachary.Taylor@aad.ar.gov](mailto:Zachary.Taylor@aad.ar.gov). Application packets may be found at: [www.aad.arkansas.gov](http://www.aad.arkansas.gov). A complete list of eligible specialty crops may be found at <http://www.ams.usda.gov/AMSV1.0/SCBGPdefinitions>

###